

Lost Books
of the Bible

The first Gospel of the INFANCY of JESUS CHRIST.

[Mr. Henry Sike, Professor of Oriental Languages at Cambridge, first translated and published this Gospel in 1697. It was received by the Gnostics, a sect of Christians in the second century, and several of its relations were credited in the following ages by other Christians, viz., Eusebius, Athanasius, Epiphanius, Chrysostom, &c. Sozomen says, he was told by many, and he credits the relations, of the idols in Egypt falling down on Joseph, and Mary's flight thither with Christ; and of Christ making a well to wash his clothes in a sycamore tree, from whence balsam afterwards proceeded. These stories are from this Gospel. Chemnitius out of Stipulensis, who had it from Peter Martyr, Bishop of Alexandria, in the third century, says, that the place in Egypt where Christ was banished is now called Matarea, about ten miles beyond Cairo; that the inhabitants constantly burn a lamp in

remembrance of it; and that there is a garden of trees yielding a balsam, which were planted by Christ when a boy. M. La Crosse cites a synod at Angamala, in the mountains of Malabar, A.D. 1599, which condemns this Gospel as commonly read by the Nestorians in that country. Ahmed Ibn Idris, a Mahometan divine, says, it was used by some Christians in common with the other four Gospels; and Ocobius de Castro mentions a Gospel of Thomas, which he says, he saw and had translated to him by an Armenian Archbishop at Amsterdam, that was read in very many churches of Asia and Africa, as the only rule of their faith. Fabricius takes it to be this Gospel. It has been supposed, that Mahomet and his coadjutors used it in compiling the Koran. There are several stories believed of Christ proceeding from this Gospel; as that which Mr. Sike relates out of La Brosse's Persic Lexicon, that Christ practised the trade of a dyer, and his working a miracle with the colours; from whence the Persian dyers honour him as their patron, and call

a dye-house the shop of Christ. Sir John Chardin mentions Persian legends concerning Christ's dispute with his schoolmaster about his A B C ; and his lengthening the cedar-board which Joseph sawed too short.]

Chapter I.

1 Caiaphas relates, that Jesus when in his cradle, informed his mother, that he was the Son. of God. 5 Joseph and Mary going to Bethlehem to be taxed, Mary's time of bringing forth arrives, and she goes into a cave. 8 Joseph fetches in a Hebrew woman, the cave filled with great lights. 11 The infant born, 17 cures the woman, 19 arrival of the shepherds.

THE following accounts we found in the book of Joseph the high-priest, called by some Caiaphas

2 He relates, that Jesus spake even when he was in the cradle, and said to his mother:

3 Mary, I am Jesus the Son of God, that word which thou didst bring forth according to the declaration of the angel Gabriel to thee, and my father hath sent me for the salvation of the world.

4 ¶ In the three hundred and ninth

year of the æra of Alexander,
Augustus published a decree that all
persons should go to be taxed in their
own country.

5 Joseph therefore arose, and with
Mary his spouse he went to
Jerusalem, and then came to
Bethlehem, that he and his family
might be taxed in the city of his
fathers.

6 And when they came by the cave,
Mary confessed to Joseph that her
time of bringing forth was come, and
she could not go on to the city, and
said, Let us go into this cave.

7 At that time the sun was very near
going down.

8 But Joseph hastened away, that he
might fetch her a midwife; and when
he saw an old Hebrew woman who
was of Jerusalem,

he said to her, Pray come hither,
good woman, and go into that cave,
and you will there see a woman just

ready to bring forth.

9 It was after sunset, when the old woman and Joseph with her reached the cave, and they both went into it.

10 And behold, it was all filled with lights, greater than the light of lamps and candles, and greater than the light of the sun itself.

11 The infant was then wrapped up in swaddling clothes, and sucking the breasts of his mother St. Mary.

12 When they both saw this light, they were surprised; the old woman asked St. Mary, Art thou the mother of this child?

13 St. Mary replied, She was.

14 On which the old woman said, Thou art very different from all other women.

15 St. Mary answered, As there is not any child like to my son, so neither is there any woman like to his mother.

16 The old woman answered, and said, O my Lady, I am come hither that I may obtain an everlasting reward.

17 Then our Lady, St. Mary, said to her, Lay thine hands upon the infant; which, when she had done, she became whole.

18 And as she was going forth, she said, From henceforth, all the days of my life, I will attend upon and be a servant of this infant.

19 After this, when the shepherds came, and had made a fire, and they were exceedingly rejoicing, the heavenly host appeared to them, praising and adoring the supreme God.

20 And as the shepherds were engaged in the same employment, the cave at that time seemed like a glorious temple, because both the tongues of angels and men united to

adore and magnify God, on account of the birth of the Lord Christ.

21 But when the old Hebrew woman saw all these evident miracles, she gave praises to God, and said, I thank thee, O God, thou God of Israel, for that mine eyes have seen the birth of the Saviour of the world.

Chapter II.

1 The child circumcised in the cave, 2 and the old woman preserving his foreskin or navel-string in a box of spikenard, Mary afterwards anoints Christ with it. 5 Christ brought to the temple, 6 shines, 7 angels stand around him adoring. 8 Simeon praises Christ.

AND when the time of his circumcision was come, namely, the eighth day, on which the law commanded the child to be circumcised, they circumcised him in the cave.

2 And the old Hebrew woman took the foreskin (others say she took the navel-string), and preserved it in an alabaster-box of old oil of spikenard.

3 And she had a son who was a druggist, to whom she said, Take heed thou sell not this alabaster box of spikenard-ointment, although thou shouldst be offered three

hundred pence for it.

4 Now this is that alabaster-box which Mary the sinner procured, and poured forth the ointment out of it upon the head and the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ, and wiped it off with the hairs of her head.

5 Then after ten days they brought him to Jerusalem, and on the fortieth day from his birth they presented him in the

temple before the Lord, making the proper offerings for him, according to the requirement of the law of Moses: namely, that every male which opens the womb shall be called holy unto God.

6 At that time old Simeon saw him shining as a pillar of light, when St. Mary the Virgin, his mother, carried him in her arms, and was filled with the greatest pleasure at the sight.

7 And the angels stood around him, adoring him, as a king's guards stand

around him.

8 Then Simeon going near to St. Mary, and stretching forth his hands towards her, said to the Lord Christ, Now, O my Lord, thy servant shall depart in peace, according to thy word;

9 For mine eyes have seen thy mercy, which thou hast prepared for the salvation of all nations; a light to all people, and the glory of thy people Israel.

10 Hannah the prophetess was also present, and drawing near, she gave praises to God, and celebrated the happiness of Mary.

Chapter III.

1 The wise men visit Christ. Mary gives them one of his swaddling clothes. 3 An angel appears to them in the form of a star. They return and make a fire, and worship the swaddling cloth, and put it in the fire, where it remains unconsumed.

AND it came to pass, when the Lord Jesus was born at Bethlehem, a city of Judæa, in the time of Herod the King; the wise men came from the East to Jerusalem, according to the prophecy of Zoradascht, [note: Zoroaster.] and brought with them offerings: namely, gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and worshipped him, and offered to him their gifts.

2 Then the Lady Mary took one of his swaddling clothes in which the infant was wrapped, and gave it to them instead of a blessing, which they received from her as a most noble present.

3 And at the same time there

appeared to them an angel in the form of that star which had before been their guide in their journey; the light of which they followed till they returned into their own country.

4 On their return their kings and princes came to them inquiring, What they had seen and done? What sort of journey and return they had? What company they had on the road?

5 But they produced the swaddling cloth which St. Mary had given to them, on account whereof they kept a feast.

6 And having, according to the custom of their country, made a fire, they worshipped it.

7 And casting the swaddling cloth into it, the fire took it, and kept it.

8 And when the fire was put out, they took forth the swaddling cloth unhurt, as much as if the fire had not touched it.

9 Then they began to kiss it, and put it upon their heads and their eyes, saying, This is certainly an undoubted truth, and it is really surprising that the fire could not burn it, and consume it.

10 Then they took it, and with the greatest respect laid it up among their treasures.

Chapter IV.

1 Herod intends to put Christ to death. 3 An angel warns Joseph to take the child and its mother into Egypt. 6 Consternation on their arrival. 13

The idols fall down. 15 Mary washes Christ's swaddling clothes, and hangs them to dry on a post. 16 A son of the chief priest puts one on his head, and being possessed of devils, they leave him.

NOW Herod, perceiving that the wise men did delay, and not return to him, called together the priests and wise men and said, Tell me in what place the Christ should be born?

2 And when they replied, in Bethlehem, a city of Judaea, he began to contrive in his own mind the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 But an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in his sleep, and said, Arise, take the child and his mother, and

go into Egypt as soon as the cock crows. So he arose, and went.

4 ¶ And as he was considering with himself about his journey, the morning came upon him.

5 In the length of the journey the girths of the saddle broke.

6 And now he drew near to a great city, in which there was an idol, to which the other idols and gods of Egypt brought their offerings and VOWS.

7 And there was by this idol a priest ministering to it, who, as often as Satan spoke out of that idol, related the things he said to the inhabitants of Egypt, and those countries.

8 This priest had a son three years old, who was possessed with a great multitude of devils, who uttered many strange things, and when the devils seized him, walked about naked with his clothes torn, throwing stones at those whom he saw.

9 Near to that idol was the inn of the city, into which when Joseph and St. Mary were come, and had turned into that inn, all the inhabitants of the city were astonished.

10 And all the magistrates and priests of the idols assembled before that idol, and made inquiry there, saying, What means all this consternation, and dread, which has fallen upon all our country?

11 The idol answered them, The unknown God is come hither, who is truly God; nor is there any one besides him, who is worthy of divine worship; for he is truly the Son of God.

12 At the fame of him this country trembled, and at his coming it is under the present commotion and consternation; and we ourselves are affrighted by the greatness of his power.

13 And at the same instant this idol fell down, and at his fall all the inhabitants of Egypt, besides others, ran together.

14 ¶ But the son of the priest, when his usual disorder came upon him, going into the inn, found there Joseph and St. Mary, whom all the rest had left behind and forsook.

15 And when the Lady St. Mary had washed the swaddling clothes of the Lord Christ, and hanged them out to dry upon a post, the boy possessed with the devil took down one of them, and put it upon his head.

16 And presently the devils began to come out of his mouth, and fly away in the shape of crows and serpents.

17 From that time the boy was healed by the power of the Lord Christ, and he began to sing praises, and give thanks to the Lord who had healed him.

18 When his father saw him restored to his former state of

health, he said, My son, what has happened to thee, and by what means wert thou cured?

19 The son answered, When the devils seized me, I went into the inn, and there found a very handsome woman with a boy, whose swaddling clothes she had just before washed, and hanged out upon a post.

20 One of these I took, and put it upon my head, and immediately the devils left me, and fled away.

21 At this the father exceedingly rejoiced, and said, My son, perhaps this boy is the son of the living God, who made the heavens and the earth.

22 For as soon as he came amongst us, the idol was broken, and all the gods fell down, and were destroyed by a greater power.

23 Then was fulfilled the prophecy
which saith, Out of Egypt I have
called my son.

Chapter V.

1 Joseph and Mary leave Egypt. 3 Go to the haunts of robbers, 4 Who, hearing a mighty noise as of a great army, flee away.

NOW Joseph and Mary, when they heard that the idol was fallen down and destroyed, were seized with fear and trembling, and said, When we were in the land of Israel, Herod, intending to kill Jesus, slew for that purpose all the infants at Bethlehem, and that neighbourhood.

2 And there is no doubt but the Egyptians if they come to hear that this idol is broken and fallen down, will burn us with fire.

3 They went therefore hence to the secret places of robbers, who robbed travellers as they pass by, of their carriages and their clothes, and carried them away bound.

4 These thieves upon their coming heard a great noise, such as the noise

of a king with a great army and many horses, and the trumpets sounding at his Overture from his own city, at which they were so affrighted as to leave all their booty behind them, and fly away in haste.

5 Upon this the prisoners arose, and loosed each other's bonds, and taking each man his bags, they went away, and saw Joseph and Mary coming to wards them, and inquired, Where is that king, the noise of whose approach the robbers heard, and left us, so that we are now come off safe?

6 Joseph answered, He will come after us.

Chapter VI.

1 Mary looks on a woman in whom Satan had taken up his abode, and she becomes dispossessed. 5 Christ kissed by a bride made dumb by sorcerers, cures her, 11 miraculously cures a gentlewoman in whom Satan had taken up his abode. 16 A leprous girl cured by the water in which he was washed, and becomes the servant of Mary and Joseph. 20 The leprous son of a prince's wife cured in like manner. 37 His mother offers large gifts to Mary, and dismisses her.

THEN they went into another where there was a woman possessed with a devil, and in whom Satan, that cursed rebel, had taken up his abode.

2 One night, when she went to fetch water, she could neither endure her clothes on, nor to be in any house; but as often as they tied her with chains or cords, she brake them, and went out into desert places, and

sometimes standing where roads crossed, and in churchyards, would throw stones at men.

3 When St. Mary saw this woman, she pitied her; whereupon Satan presently left her, and fled away in the form of a young man, saying, Wo to me, because of thee, Mary, and thy son.

4 So the woman was delivered from her torment; but considering herself naked, she blushed, and avoided seeing any man, and having put on her clothes, went home, and gave an account of her case to her father and relations, who, as they were the best of the city, entertained St. Mary and Joseph with the greatest respect.

5 The next morning having received a sufficient supply of provisions for the road, they went from them, and about the evening of the day arrived at another town, where a marriage was then about to be solemnized; but by the arts of Satan and the practices of some sorcerers, the bride was

become so dumb, that she could not so much as open her mouth.

6 But when this dumb bride saw the Lady St. Mary entering into the town, and carrying the Lord Christ in her arms, she stretched out her hands to the Lord Christ, and took him in her arms, and closely hugging him, very often kissed him, continually moving him and pressing him to her body.

7 Straightway the string of her tongue was loosed, and her ears were opened, and she began to sing praises unto God, who had restored her.

8 So there was great joy among the inhabitants of the town that night, who thought that God and his angels were come down among them.

9 ¶ In this place they abode three days, meeting with the greatest respect and most splendid entertainment.

10 And being then furnished by the

people with provisions for the road, they departed and went to another city, in which they were inclined to lodge, because it was a famous place.

11 There was in this city a gentlewoman, who, as she went down one day to the river to bathe, behold cursed Satan leaped upon her in the form of a serpent,

12 And folded himself about her belly, and every night lay upon her.

13 This woman seeing the Lady St. Mary, and the Lord Christ the infant in her bosom, asked the Lady St. Mary, that she would give her the child to kiss, and carry in her arms.

14 When she had consented, and as soon as the woman had moved the child, Satan left her, and fled away, nor did the woman ever afterwards see him.

15 Hereupon all the neighbours praised the Supreme God, and the woman rewarded them with ample

beneficence.

16 On the morrow the same woman brought perfumed water to wash the Lord Jesus; and when she had washed him, she preserved the water .

17 And there was a girl there, whose body was white with a leprosy, who being sprinkled with this water, and washed, was instantly cleansed from her leprosy.

18 The people therefore said Without doubt Joseph and Mary, and that boy are Gods, for they do not look like mortals.

19 And when they were making ready to go away, the girl, who had been troubled with the leprosy, came and desired they would permit her to go along

with them; so they consented, and the girl went with them till. they came to a city, in which was the palace of a great king, and whose

house was not far from the inn.

20 Here they staid, and when the girl went one day to the prince's wife, and found her in a sorrowful and mournful condition, she asked her the reason of her tears.

21 She replied, Wonder not at my groans, for I am under a great misfortune, of which I dare not tell any one.

22 But, says the girl, if you will entrust me with your private grievance, perhaps I may find you a remedy for it.

23 Thou, therefore, says the prince's wife, shalt keep the secret, and not discover it to any one alive!

24 I have been married to this prince, who rules as king over large dominions, and lived long with him, before he had any child by me.

25 At length I conceived by him, but alas! I brought forth a leprous son;

which, when he saw, he would not own to be his, but said to me,

26 Either do thou kill him, or send him to some nurse in such a place, that he may be never heard of; and now take care of yourself; I will never see you more.

27 So here I pine, lamenting my wretched and miserable circumstances. Alas, my son! alas, my husband! Have I disclosed it to you?

28 The girl replied, I have found a remedy for your disease, which I promise you, for I also was leprous, but God hath cleansed me, even he who is called Jesus, the son of the Lady Mary.

29 The woman inquiring where that God was, whom she spake of, the girl answered He lodges with you here in the same house.

30 But how can this be? says she; where is he? Behold, replied the girl, Joseph and Mary; and the infant who

is with them is called Jesus: and it is he who delivered me from my disease and torment.

31 But by what means, says she, were you cleansed from your leprosy? Will you not tell me that?

32 Why not? says the girl; I took the water with which his body had been washed, and poured it upon me, and my leprosy vanished.

33 The prince's wife then arose and entertained them, providing a great feast for Joseph among a large company of men.

34 And the next day took perfumed water to wash the Lord Jesus, and afterwards poured the same water upon her son, whom she had brought with her, and her son was instantly cleansed from his leprosy.

35 Then she sang thanks and praises unto God, and said, Blessed is the mother that bare thee, O Jesus!

36 Dost thou thus cure men of the same nature with thyself, with the water with which thy body is washed ?

37 She then offered very large gifts to the Lady Mary, and sent her away with all imaginable respect.